

New Missile Is Placed In Europe by Soviet; 2 More Are Expected

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WASHINGTON, April 23 — The Soviet Union has begun to deploy a new nuclear-armed missile in East Germany, a step that Carter Administration officials described today as raising the risk of a stepped-up arms race in Europe.

The officials said that the missile, designated the SS-21 by American intelligence analysts, was recently observed with Soviet forces in East Germany. It is described as the first new nuclear missile deployed in Eastern Europe in over a decade and as one of three short-range missiles that the Soviet Union has recently developed. A White House official foresaw the others showing up in Eastern Europe in the coming months.

The SS-21 is described as belonging to the class of so-called tactical nuclear missiles that the United States and the Soviet Union have deployed on the territory of their European allies since the mid-1950's. Both have several hundred short-range nuclear missiles there, as well as nuclear bombs that can be carried by fighter aircraft.

The Russians' evident decision to ex-

pand their shorter-range nuclear arsenal comes as Moscow and Washington are reaching the final stages of a treaty limiting strategic — that is, long-range — weapons. The SS-21 would not be limited under the treaty, and Administration aides view the Soviet deployment as a worrisome sign that an accord covering strategic arms could have the effect of increased competition in shorter-range missiles in and around Europe.

With a range of about 75 miles, the SS-21 is believed to be similar in design to the American Lance missile, which was deployed in Western Europe in 1972. Also included in the Russians' effort to upgrade their nuclear capability directed against Western Europe is a new intermediate-range missile, the SS-20, which was deployed last year and is based in western areas of the Soviet Union.

Several Western European leaders, including Helmut Schmidt, the West German Chancellor, have expressed concern over new Soviet nuclear deployments and have privately urged President Carter to include the weapons in the negotiations with Moscow. So far the talks have not focused on nuclear arms deployed in Europe, but Mr. Carter has said that after the completion of the treaty he wants to make that category of weapons a prime subject of a new round of negotiations.

Secretary of Defense Harold Brown and the defense ministers of the major Western European countries are scheduled to meet at Homestead Air Force Base in southern Florida tomorrow for two days of secret talks on whether the North Atlantic Treaty Organization should modernize its short-range nuclear arsenal in response to the Soviet weapon. In particular, officials said, the ministers will address the sensitive subject of developing and deploying a nuclear missile that would be based in Western Europe and would be capable of striking targets in the Soviet Union.

Although senior Defense Department officials are pressing allied governments to agree to a plan for the missile by the end of the year, many Europeans are skeptical and are said to be asking that the Administration investigate the possibility of conferring with the Russians on a limitation on new tactical nuclear arms in Europe. Officials said that the appearance of the Soviet SS-21 in East Germany would be likely to intensify this issue by putting increased pressure on West Germany and other countries to approve American plans for modernizing NATO's tactical missile forces.

In addition, some Pentagon officials argued that it could raise once again the controversial question of the deployment of the American neutron weapon, an enhanced-radiation device designed for use against personnel. A year ago, after a long and divisive debate in NATO over whether to deploy it aboard short-range American missiles in Europe, Mr. Carter decided against production. However, he said that he would reconsider if the Soviet Union failed to exercise restraint in nuclear deployments.

The discovery of the SS-21 in East Germany has already led some military officials and aides in the National Security Council to suggest that it might be timely to review Mr. Carter's decision. However, White House officials said that with a meeting between President Carter and Leonid I. Brezhnev, the Soviet leader, likely to be announced in the coming weeks, the chances of a review of the neutron decision were slim.